Bighorn National Forest

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Future Meets Past at Historic Ranger Station

(Sheridan, WY) – July 21 will be a very special day at Big Goose Ranger Station. With the support of several partners, the Bighorn National Forest embraces new technology as they dedicate a solid oxide fuel cell at the Big Goose Ranger Station west of Sheridan. In stark contrast to the vintage 1930's buildings, the fuel cell is cutting edge. Big Goose is the first Forest Service facility in the nation to convert to the new means of power and heat production.

"The dedication ceremony will be a great time to demonstrate our commitment to pioneering the use of new technology, as we salute the conservation pioneers of the early Forest Service," said District Ranger Craig Yancey. "We look forward to the public joining us at this Centennial event.

In addition to the formal dedication ceremony, which will feature remarks from each of the national partners in the project, visitors can tour the facility. The buildings were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) between 1937 and 1942. The film "The Greatest Good", a nationally acclaimed documentary about the 100 year history of the Forest Service will be available for viewing. Interpretive displays will highlight details of the new technology, as well as historic views of Big Goose.

Partners in the fuel cell demonstration project include the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Research & Development Center Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (CERL) and the Department of Defense's Fuel Cell Test and Evaluation Center (FC*tec*). Additional grant funding is provided by the Propane Education and Research Council and the U. S. Department of Energy's Federal Energy Management Program.

Similar to large batteries, fuel cells convert energy stored by hydrogen into electricity, heat and water. Because the cells do not burn their fuel, they virtually produce no pollution. The remoteness, high elevation, cold climate, and the need to shut down the operation for the winter, all pose additional challenges and present experts a unique opportunity to further existing knowledge about fuel cells. Through the use of a satellite uplink, the fuel cells will be monitored for important research data. Economically competitive and feasible fuel cell technology for remote locations may still be several years away, but demonstration sites like Big Goose Ranger Station will allow government agencies to prepare for full utilization of emerging technologies when they are practical.

For more information about the 10:00 am dedication ceremony on July 21, and to receive a map to the dedication site, call the Tongue Ranger District at 307-674-2600.

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